

# FIGHTING FOR A CONSUMER-FRIENDLY MARKET: STRICTER RULES IN THE EU

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A spate of high-profile cases across the EU has brought the spotlight firmly on how to combat unfair commercial practices and increase consumer protection. The European Commission has been focussing on how to increase consumer protection and reinforce the EU's reputation for being a high quality, safe trading place. The outcome is the EU's "New Deal for Consumers" legislative package which came into force on 7 January 2020. Member States have 24 months to implement it.

A good example of the issues faced was "Dieselgate", the emissions testing scandal, which affected a wide number of consumers. With the EU market marred by allegations of widespread unfair practices, if we look at Italy, the Italian Competition Authority recently issued huge fines against three major corporations – Tecnotrade, the HP Group and Tiger – for unfair commercial practices. In those cases, the breaches ranged from selling products that were not actually available, failing pre-contractual requirements, not delivering the promised products and prohibiting reimbursements. It was clear that a strong deterrent was really needed.

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